

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEDGWICK COUNTY PILOTS E-TAX PAYMENTS

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – During the June 13 Sedgwick County Commission meeting, Commissioners approved the concept of a pilot program to allow credit card tax payments via the County's web site. This pilot program will allow citizens to pay for their second half of real and personal property taxes via the internet, using Visa or Mastercard. Citizens may access this service at Sedgwick County's website, www.sedgwickcounty.org, starting June 14, 2001.

Jan Kennedy, Sedgwick County Treasurer, the Sedgwick County Division of Information and Operations and the Sedgwick County Division of Finance have worked together to establish this convenient method of tax-payment for citizens.

"Over the past two weeks, we have received over 75 calls a day from citizens asking if we accept credit cards, and at least 40 calls a day inquiring if we provide on-line tax payment," said Jan Kennedy. "It has become apparent that citizens are getting more comfortable with on-line payments, use them for retail and banking business, and are expecting those services available from local government as well," Kennedy said.

In addition to the convenience this service provides the taxpayer, it also provides significant benefit to Sedgwick County. Because payments are made on-line, the transaction is completely electronic, reducing staff time to process each payment.

(Continued on Page 2)

The result is greater efficiency and accuracy. Also, it provides some taxpayers with another option for payment, especially those who cannot make the full payment at the tax deadline. This will reduce the number of delinquencies and get tax dollars into the system faster.

"I see this as a cooperative effort and part of the e-commerce trend going on in this country," said Sedgwick County Commissioner Tom Winters. "I enthusiastically support it because I think it's a measured approach that will help us get started. This 21st century is made up of new ways of doing business, and credit cards and e-commerce are an integral part of this process," Winters said.

This pilot program was intentionally designed as a "short-term" pilot project, allowing only 7 days for citizens to access the on-line payment system. While it is recognized that only a small percentage of citizens will use this new service during this time, the pilot project allows Sedgwick County the opportunity to test the new on-line payment system before it is widely marketed. Full implementation is planned for the December tax payment deadline.

The Sedgwick County Division of Finance estimates this new service may cost \$43,000 in credit card fees. Individual users will not pay a fee at this time for the service.

"We see this as part of the cost of doing business in today's environment," said Jan Kennedy. "Citizens expect service and convenience, and this is one way we can improve our internal business processes to serve our community better," Kennedy said.

***** Citizens may inquire about the service through the Sedgwick County
Treasurer's Office at 383-7414*****

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*****FACT SHEET ATTACHED*****